

# Edison Sees Higher Fares as Only Solution of Street Car Problem

## Inventor Declares There Is No Good Reason Why the Workingman Should Not Pay Rate Necessary to Keep Lines Functioning Properly—Attributes Opposition to the Reds

By EDWARD MARSHALL.

OUT in front of Thomas A. Edison's own corner of the great establishment which bears his name at Orange, N. J., mounted on a pedestal of masonry, is the first of the Edison trolley car mechanisms, a single truck with the electric motor connected with the axle.

It was the pioneer appliance of cheap, quick power street transportation in America. Naturally he is proud of it. It is the only evidence of his many inventive triumphs expressed in anything approaching monumental form about his laboratory, although within his private room stands a beautiful statue of the Spirit of Electricity upholding an Edison incandescent light. He is about equally proud of the two memorials to his two greatest achievements. No one yet has devised a way of illustrating the invention of the phonograph or the perfection of the moving picture in monumental form.

The electric light, he has told me often, interests him most because it has increased the length of the human day, making it possible without restraint for ambition to study and drive much longer than had been possible before it was perfected. The perfection of the trolley, he believes, has done an equal service to humanity by enabling men and women to work in the great communities and live beyond their borders; it has saved time, too, as he says, "adding to the span of human life, for every wasted hour is a dead hour."

He is very greatly distressed by the financial troubles of the trolley companies throughout the country, although financially uninterested, for he feels that it may stop development and thus hamper human and national progress. The other day he talked to me of it.

**Urges Quick Action.**

"I know of the plight the trolley companies are in," he said. "I know of the commission which has been studying it. I also know that if something is not done and done quickly to permit the trolleys to increase their incomes a condition will arise which will do as much to hurt the workingman as to hurt the trolley."

"More than five billions of money are invested in American street railways and suburban electric lines and on account of the great increase in wages and the cost of materials during and since the war they are on the verge of bankruptcy and have appealed to the President for relief. I believe much of national importance depends on the action following the report of the commission which he appointed."

In New York, on my way to Mr. Edison's, I had paid a five cent trolley fare; in New Jersey, after I had left the Hudson Tubes, I had paid a seven cent trolley fare. He said that through the greater portion of the country the fares had not been raised.

"Agitators, politicians and Socialists—radicals of all sorts—are at the bottom of the opposition," said he. "Most men, individually, are pretty fair and reasonable, but often a crowd—unreasonable in action, forming an unreasonable and unreasoning aggregate. Do they actually hypnotize each other—the agitators and the crowds? I often wonder. Cannot men reason fairly in a crowd? Is a certain cubic space necessary to a man's clear thinking? If men get closer do they limit stop functioning? I confess that I don't know; but I know that when crowds gather something often seems to stop their thinking. Perhaps a man who wants to think clearly should get into the centre of a ten acre lot."

**His Logic About the Extra Fare.**

"There is no good reason whatsoever why the workingman should not pay the extra fare necessary to keep the trolleys functioning properly. Men who once drew wages of \$1.75 per day now are drawing wages of \$14 and \$15 a day, which more than meets the increased cost of living. Why shouldn't they pay a few cents more to the trolley companies who have had to raise their operating costs enormously? My employees subscribed over \$5,000,000 to the various Liberty Loans and the men of all the other factories around us did about as well. Of course, they didn't live, meanwhile, at high-priced hotels; but they were able to live comfortably here in Orange because of increased wages, and they've got to bear their share of other increases."

"Trolley wages have gone up as they have. Some one has got to pay the increase. They get the benefit of the trolley service. They mustn't shirk their obligation. We employers don't shirk ours."

"The workmen of the nation have a vital interest in the prosperity of the trolley lines. I believe that in transportation lies the salvation of our country; one of civilization's greatest evils is that of congestion in the cities."

**Bear this in mind:**

"Every man who works, doing his part in the world, is entitled to one good woman and a home."

"It is the fact that under the present system he cannot always afford these things that is responsible for most of the present day embitterment; his longing and his hopelessness are at the bottom of all the unrest in the world. All the war of labor against capital, all the demands for higher wages rise from this intensity of longing for the one good woman and the home. Solve the problem by giving every man the wife and a home and the soap box orator will go out of business."

"This proves the fundamental nature of the trolley problem. Only the trolley can give each man his home, and without the home he cannot make the one good woman happy."

"That's the answer to our situation—trolleys reaching everywhere and quantity production of homes—of



the ever restless American, the product of our cross breeding and champagne climate.

"And finally after his various victories he builds a house four times too big for him, makes his wife miserable (whether she knows it or not) with an excess of unnecessary servants, hires a French cook, and finally dies (probably at no great age) of Bright's disease of the kidneys due to overeating. Let the public watch the magnate; let it be certain that he does not get too much for his labors; but it would be unwise entirely to wipe him out. He fills his very useful place in the economy of progress."

**Development Must Not End.**

"For example, who would wish trolley development in this country to come to an end? It must not come to an end. When the effects of this war are over and we spit on our hands and take a fresh hold we must have extensions, not curtailment; we must have short trolley hauls a-plenty and long distance trolley extensions reaching everywhere. They are vitally essential to the progress of the country."

"And when I am asked if trolley extension can continue without recognition of new conditions in increase of fares I smile. A Slovak miner could answer the query quite as well as I."

It must be either excess fare to attract new capital to the trolley companies so that they may pay their interest and make their extensions or bankruptcy."

"But the present trolley capitalists, very largely consisting of 'water,' doesn't it?" I asked.

"In many cases," Mr. Edison replied, "that has happened because the public has allowed it to happen. I blame no one but the public. But it has nothing to do with the present trolley situation. We can't punish these old owners; they are out of it. That is split milk. All we can do is to see that none in future shall be spoiled."

"We have the trolleys now, and need them badly; we want them operated so as to give the greatest service; we want them extended; we want to get new capital for them; we want to pay a fair interest to the owners of the securities sold by the original possessors, and, incidentally, is it a mere bagatelle that we want to save the five billions already invested from defaulting on its interest? That would kick up a fuss that sooner or later would hit every man, woman and child in the country, directly or indirectly. Especially it would hit all those who travel by the trolleys."

"And it does not seem to me that it should be so very difficult to make a plan whereby an increased fare for

## Warns Public Whole Country Will Suffer Unless Quick Action Is Taken to Save Trolley Companies From Their Plight

newspapers they can hurt their shafts at him, and all that ought to hit will hit because he will be a target in his open—he will be a person and can be definitely aimed at. You can't aim at a commission. Shoot at management, commission till you've worn out your bow and it won't feel your arrows, but will hold on to its fat jobs and be entirely comfortable."

"Herbert Spencer's law always will be admitted to be true because he absolutely proved it: That in all deliberative bodies of men the sum total of the results will be below the intelligence of the least intelligent member." If Spencer were alive he would be pleased by the Interstate Commerce Commission. It would delight him."

"These are great days in the world, full of big questions. There is the question of autocracy and hereditary rulers. It is answered by the German Crown Prince—he absolutely answers it—he, and Germany's escape from having him as Emperor. Democracy is the only possible stable system of government, but it may build for itself a fatal adjunct in a bureaucracy. The smaller its bureaucracy is kept the better. If its bureaucracy is allowed slowly and silently to increase in size and power the day will come when your democracy will slide, slide, and be transformed into an autocracy. Bureaucracy rules Russia; the Czar was its puppet. Bureaucracy is the curse of France. Bureaucracy will ruin any thing."

"At present the American public playing straight into the hands of the bureaucracy which recently has grown up in Washington. A democracy never should operate any public utilities save those necessary for national defence and such others as lighthouses, &c. In democratic business should be given a free hand—full liberty, that is, to tread a straight line. Business must not be killed; it must be kept honest. That's the duty of a government, I think."

"With regard to socialism I have had this thought: If all there is known about government were contained in twenty-five volumes I would admit that the followers of Karl Marx had read the first one and are disputing about it, while the Bolshevik Soviets are looking at the shelf of books with interest, but being unable to read are getting little good from them."

"Nothing interests me more than the ideas of the so-called proletarians about the capitalists. Of course you know that I work and for years have worked directly and continually among the employees who help me. They really are pretty good men individually, pretty shrewd in minor matters, they have horse sense and help each other; but with regard to the larger and more complicated questions of their relationships to the great scheme of things their ignorance is achillean."

"Their sense of loyalty to each other is very strong. At time of strikes they and their families will endure almost to the verge of starvation before they will go back on their companions. In this they differ from the higher type financial and business men. These get together, agree to do a certain thing, and when the meeting is through are likely to rush to the nearest telegraph office so that they may sell each other out quickly. They can't wait to do it, such is their eagerness."

**Labor Trouble Psychology.**

"When workmen think they have not been treated fairly, that the factory or company employing them is making large profits while they are not getting their proportion of prosperity, they do not merely work themselves up into a nasty frame of mind, but achieve a stage in which their mind ceases to function. Often they strike and give no reason. They are surly. Any one who tries to do anything with or for them for the first two weeks after this has happened will get into trouble."

"The thing to do in such circumstances is to be patient, is just to let them have their time off, let them cool down. Then endeavor to talk business and it will be found that three or four of their elder men will find it easy to come to an understanding with a properly disposed executive representing the other side."

"One of the worst enemies of the worker is a badly managed factory. Often I have wondered why men in such factories don't strike against such

mismanagement. What chances have they to make good as workmen in a factory that doesn't make money? I believe that workers in such enterprises should warn the owners that unless better management is provided, better machinery installed or what not, better systems of handling materials provided, so that there will be higher profits for them to share in, they will quit in sheer disgust and go to better managed enterprises."

"I believe that every one who really counts would be delighted by strikes of this sort; such strikers would deserve some public recognition, at least as much as a reception."

"But they can't always understand the capitalist who talks business with them. Suppose, for example, I put to them a case like this: assume that in a town are two shops, manufacturing the same article, with the same number of men, neither making any profit, and then a new manager comes along who makes one of the shops profitable without working the employees any harder, by turning out from it 25 per cent. more than the old product. How should this gain be divided?"

"Some men will say that the employer isn't entitled to any of the increase, some will be more reasonable, some will think fifty-fifty division about right. It is curious."

"They resent the millionaire. I ask them what a millionaire has got that they haven't, and the reply will be something like this: 'He has a million, while we have a few hundred.' I try to explain that the million they say the millionaire has really hasn't got, for it is all invested in factories."

"He has nothing, in fact, except his house, his furniture, his automobile—and he is giving employment to, say, 700 men. He has pieces of paper saying that the factory belongs to him, but this paper is useless, for he can't eat it any more than he can eat the factory, and when he dies he can take neither with him. His son will get it, and then the son's profits from it will go to build more factories, employ more men, and so on forever."

"Really the millionaire is a mere trustee who worries more than the workman does, usually has poor health, and really is very little if any better off than the workman who has sense and saves. But you can't make the workman see this."

**More Education in Economics.**

"He is hopelessly unable to understand when I tell him that wealth exists to-day grown out of the savings of the centuries who built ancient Rome and brought down through a long line of capitalists, or rather trustees; that possibly he will leave sayings when he dies, which will go chinking down the years in the same manner, his descendants adding to them until, perhaps, in a century or two, then living Socialists will seize the land and distribute it to the mob on the ground that capitalists have obtained their money wrongfully."

"What the ordinary American man needs to-day is a little more education in economics, such as he had during the Bryan campaign, when there was an effort to work off 50-cent dollars on America."

I asked Mr. Edison what sort of an arrangement he would make for the operation of all public utilities and the regulation of their service and profits.

"That is a complicated proposition," he replied. "You had better ask Guy E. Tripp. He has had more experience and has a better vision than I have on the subject. I have written to Mr. Tripp explaining this and asking him. 'There is one thing which should NOT be done, and that is operation by municipalities. I may say that a contract might be made which would work well under any circumstances. It would provide, first, for a determination of costs, and second, state that all the money written to a clause should be inserted allowing the companies half of all their savings in the course of operation, the other half to go to the community, with either party at any time at liberty to call for a new determination of profits and costs. If the original basis of such a contract was fair, if it was drawn with vision, then there would be no further trouble in raising money for upkeep, extension or operation and the public would be rightly served at the right price.'"

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## The Man Who Tried to Trap the British Fleet

THE man who tried to trap the British fleet, Ignatius Tribich Lincoln, Darlington's disloyal Liberal ex-M. P., has recently been deported to Hungary, his native land. Great Britain is now free of one of the most amazing and notorious rogues that came to light during the great war.

His career is almost unique. Nobody of recent years has had a history like his—luckily. He was born on the banks of the Danube of parents who were Hungarian Jews. After an exciting and chequered early life he became a convert to Christianity, and went to Germany and Canada to study theology.

Two years afterward he was appointed Presbyterian minister in Montreal. The next year he was made a deacon of the Anglican Church by the Archbishop of Montreal. He resigned his curacy, giving the explanation of "overwork" for his action.

In 1904 he went to England, after a stay of some months in Germany, and became curate at Appleford, a small village in Kent.

After a time he resigned his orders and became private secretary to B. S. Rowntree, on whose behalf he travelled extensively on the Continent.

He then took up politics, and selected Darlington for his constituency. After a strenuous campaign, in which his wonderful gift of oratory stood him in good stead, he succeeded in defeating Pike Pease by 29 votes. For nearly a year he was Darlington's M. P., and then resigned on the ground of expense.

The next heard of him was that he had compounded with his creditors for \$1 in \$5, his liabilities being \$25,000. Lincoln then took to travelling in Rumania and Galicia, and in August, 1914, he was back again in London with an appointment at the General Post Office as Hungarian censor.

After that he went to Germany (having failed in his attempt to become attached to the British Secret Service) and, getting in touch with the German Service, was sent back to England on a spying expedition.

Upon arrival there he again made an effort to join the British Secret Service. The authorities, however, were far too wide awake for Mr. Lincoln, who actually came to the conclusion that Great Britain was not a healthy place for him and bled to America.

In this country he seems to have given himself up to publicly declaring his hatred for England and everything English. He became obsessed with the desire to do the British Empire a bad turn, and did everything that was in his power to aid German propaganda.

Toward the end of August, 1915, he was arrested in Brooklyn for forging a guarantee purporting to be signed by B. S. Rowntree, and with obtaining \$2,750 and \$750 by false pretences.

Chief Inspector A. Ward, one of the best detectives Scotland Yard ever possessed (and who later was killed in an air raid in London) came to New York to take Lincoln back to stand trial.

Lincoln, however, did not wish to go to England, and used every delaying artifice possible. He even went so far as to escape from prison. But in the end he was brought back to London, tried and sentenced to three years at hard labor for forgery.

This sentence has now been served and the Home Secretary, after cancelling his naturalization papers, has ordered his deportation to Hungary.

During his stay in New York Lincoln wrote his famous book, "Revelations of an International Spy." The book told the story of how he tried to trap a portion of the British fleet, and place it in such a position that it could be pounded out of existence.

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## Promoting Forest Products

SPECIAL efforts are being made to make available for industrial construction purposes all of the new information obtained by the war activities and experiments of the Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wis., which is operated by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture.

During the war the laboratory was given over almost exclusively to research work on problems involving the use of wood in special application to war requirements. Most of the information thus obtained has some application to the peace time use of wood by various industries.

With a view to establishing a more intelligent and economical use of wood the laboratory now is trying to bring about contact and cooperation with these industries.

In solving many of the problems confronting them in their war work the laboratory's experts necessarily solved many of the problems that for years have confronted the wood-using industries. Their experiments having to do with the best way of kiln-drying wood resulted in information being obtained that promises to give a marked impetus to the development of more efficient and economical kiln methods in many industries. The problems of the laboratory also involved the development of water-resistant glues, the strength value of different forms and species of plywood, the possibilities of built-up material and fabricated construction, the development of water resistant finishes for wood and many others that will be invaluable.

Waterproof glues of good use developed at the laboratory promise to have very broad application in the industrial field. This has been recognized by manufacturers of furniture and plywood and many firms have sent their own experts to the laboratory for instruction along these lines. The information available, if put into use in furniture manufacture, should eliminate much if not all of the present criticism of poorly glued furniture and also should make it possible for manufacturers to adjust their glueing processes to meet various climatic conditions. For instance, one of the present problems in exporting American-made furniture to the Tropics is the inability of the glue joints to resist the climatic conditions prevailing there.

A particularly interesting field of possibilities for the greater utilization of wood and wood waste as a result of the war experiments of the laboratory is the use of built-up and fabricated construction. This is merely utilizing small pieces of wood and a glue which make the joint as strong or stronger than wood, and building them up in the forms desired. It was found, for example, that a laminated wood beam for airplanes could be constructed that was as strong as a solid beam, and this at once made possible a great increase in the use of spruce material which otherwise would have been useless for aircraft construction.

While laminated construction has been used for several years, it has been restricted largely to interior use because glues which could withstand exterior moisture conditions were not available. Now such glues are available and open up the whole field of exterior use for this type of construction. One of the best forms of construction for such doors going into the export trade. A series of laminated bowing pins and shoe lasts were also made at the laboratory and are now being tested in commercial use.

During the war laminated gun stocks were shown to be entirely feasible, and probably would have been adopted by the War Department had the war continued. The practicability of laminated wagon hubs and felloes is being tested, and in fact, as further information becomes available, laminated and built-up wooden construction might well revolutionize present logging, milling and wood-working factory practices and save to the nation a large percentage of the wood which now goes into the waste heap.